

Last Look

## Lei Leadership

*The new governor in paradise is breaking down barriers.*



**B**ETTE MIDLER ONCE QUIPPED THAT HER CHILDHOOD IN Honolulu featured the typical problems faced by a Jewish girl growing up in a Polynesian neighborhood. Now another Jewish woman is set to address the problems of *all* the citizens of Hawaii. Linda Lingle will be sworn in this month as the state's first woman governor, its first Jewish chief executive and the first Republican to occupy the office in 40 years. (She is also a Life Member of Hadassah.)

Hawaii is heavily Democratic and—needless to say—

heavily non-Jewish. Lingle was aided by her image as a moderate Republican—she is pro-choice and opposes school prayer—and by her tough stance on terrorism in a state with many military residents.

But the new governor also thinks her Jewish heritage helped. She says it has given her a better understanding of diversity, helping her connect with citizens of different religious and ethnic backgrounds. Hawaii is one of the most ethnically diverse states in America.

Will she become known as The Divine Ms. L? **H**

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